

Lesson 1: Personal Faith & The Challenge of Conviction

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1.) Looking At Faith Over Multiple Generations

Over time, we can stand on the shoulders of those who come before us to build, learn, and grow. Or, over time, we can allow important lessons to be forgotten, become lukewarm, and abandon God for the pleasures of the world.

- What phrases in these passages indicate the path each generation followed:
 - The Tower of Babel. (Genesis 11:4-8)
 - Joshua & The Judges (Judges 2:6-15)
 - The Return after Captivity (Nehemiah 1:4-9, 2:17-18)
 - The Life of Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5-8, 2 Timothy 3:13)
 - The Church at Ephesus (Acts 20:26-32, Revelation 2:4)
- Why do you think people often doubt the faith and conclusions of previous generations?

List controversies, theological questions, religious doctrines, moral or social influences of the last 20 years that challenge Christians who are now in their twenties or thirties, and which are expressed in personal moral decisions or religious practices (or lack of practice) that are different from previous generations (parents or grandparents.)

- What Bible passages or examples would tell us to expect these kind of challenges?
- What advantages and “disadvantages” might come from being “raised in the church” when confronting these challenges?

2.) The Emotional Challenge of Being Different

- How do you think Daniel felt being so different from his peers? (Daniel 1:8-21)
- In the Sermon on the Mount, how did Jesus describe the choice to be different?

<u>Like The World</u>	<u>Like Jesus</u>
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 - Matthew 7:13-14
 - Matthew 7:17-21

MODERN CHALLENGES TO FAITH

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- Think of a time you felt different from the crowd for being a Christian that you can discuss with teens and young adults?

3.) Giving Young Adults Some Practice

- Like exercise for our bodies, our faith needs to be stretched and challenged to mature.
 - Read 1 Timothy 4:6-8. What habits will help us grow in godliness?
 - Parents: Are you allowing your child's personal beliefs to be put to the test? What situations are they in that require them to choose to be different from others?
- The Marriage Factor: One of the biggest long-term factors on a Christian's faith will be the person they marry. Read these passages and make some notes that will help them make a Godly choice about marriage.
 - Genesis 24:1-4, 12-14
 - 1 Kings 11:3-4
 - 1 Corinthians 15:33
 - 1 Peter 3:1-2
- The Marriage Factor: How will a young adult be able to tell if a person they are dating loves God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength? (Joshua 24:15, Matthew 12:47-50, John 14:21-24, 1 John 5:3, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

4.) Feeding Our Faith

- What does Paul expect people who have heard the gospel to do?
 - Philippians 2:12
 - 1 Timothy 4:6
 - 2 Timothy 2:15
- How often does Psalm 19:7-11 describe your feelings about the Bible? Mark a spot:

Rarely - - Sometimes - - Often - - Almost Always

The Bottomline:

- Over time, people usually become less faithful to God, but it doesn't have to be this way.
- We must be purposeful to carefully learn about God, His love, and His commands.
- Being different from our culture will be difficult, but it is absolutely essential.
- From an early age, it is important to stand up and be different when peers are sinning.
- Who you marry will have an enormous influence on your faithfulness. Choose wisely.
- Each person is responsible for feeding their faith diligently.